The official electronic newsletter of the Sebago Canoe Club in Brooklyn, NY

kayaking, canoeing, sailing, racing, rowing

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A New Dock





COMMODORE'S REPORT By Walter Lewandowski

Hail Sebago,

A spring report from the outer banks of North Carolina. Later in this issue you will read about all the projects, trips and activities planned for this season. Here we will talk about all the business of Sebago.

Thankfully our dock is finally back in shape just in time for our May events. Special thanks to Vice Commodore John Wright and New York City Parks for staying on top of all the construction coordination. Plus the crew of carpenter volunteers whose additional work helped get us shipshape.

This season most of you are aware of our new automated waiver system, a great way to reduce the behind-the-scene paperwork and filing done to keep Sebago running. This new insurance has given much more robust coverage for all activities on site or remotely. Thank you everyone for submitting your waivers so promptly! Please be aware you will be asked to sign a new waiver every March. Do remember if you plan on visiting the Lake you need to maintain your ACA membership. We encourage all members to maintain your ACA memberships; they are the only national organization advocating for human-powered boating and water access - www.americancanoe.org

Many of you have noticed the iPads mounted in the clubhouse for use in waiver collection. These iPads are secured in such a way as to only allow use of the Smartwaiver app. It is the last piece of our new insurance and risk management program. Please do not tamper with them. Thanks to Beth Eller, Luis Matallana, John Decker, Lori Gralnick and Carlos Negron for all their hard work to help us manage our transition to electronic membership management.

Once again, we successfully completed our annual dues collection well before our on-water activities commenced. Thanks again for everyone's cooperation. This has put us in position to better plan and budget for our ambitious range of programs, including those that let us serve the community in addition to having fun. Please remember dues will be collected in mid-October, the beginning of our Constitutional fiscal year.

One more improvement to our administrative management is a new Google membership listserv. This will enable us to better welcome our new members. A shout-out to Beth Bloedow for updating our list. Please make sure you use this new list to share information.

Sebago places great emphasis on community service. We have our summer youth program, open paddles and now an adaptive paddling program. Over the winter we won a grant valued at more than \$80,000 for training and equipment to help us provide for this incredibly rewarding experience. We are at the cutting edge of this paddling discipline. Anyone wishing to volunteer, and many on-land and water opportunities are available, please contact me by email.

Finally a shout-out to all our incredible members that make the Club so great. Welcome to all our new members. Hope to see you on the water! Check the calendar and come join us.

Don't forget to come to our General Meeting in September; we like to hear from all our members.

Commodore@sebagocanoeclub.org



SEA KAYAK REPORT By Tony Pignatello

Ahoy,

We have been preparing for the coming season while the new dock is being built. On 3/19 we had a very well-attended kayak committee meeting where we made plans for the coming season. Cindy Louis and friends had a kayak repair day on 4/10. One or two more of these will be required to get the fleet completely ready. The club put out new paddles, spray skirts, PFD's, and float bags that were purchased last year. Dottie and Walter Lewandowski managed an instructor meeting on 4/24 and set up the training classes for the year. That's enough looking backward; let's look ahead.

Our first big event is the All-Club Invitational on 5/28. It will feature a "Brooklyn Clam Bake" and for the first time ever, races between the metropolitan clubs. Once again Steve Heinzerling, Melanie Lorek, and Milton Puryear will lead evening paddles every Tuesday night. Starting on 6/1 we'll have open paddles every Wednesday and Saturday.

These are a good way for beginners to learn kayaking and have fun. Starting on 5/21 Vicki Moss and Anthony Abagnalo will lead moonlight paddles monthly on the night of the full moon. Laurie Bleich will lead several paddles on Thursday evenings. Check the calendar for exact dates. We have a 3-day camping trip to Cedar Point L.I. on 8/12-14.

Throughout the year there will be instructional classes in Jamaica Bay and up at the lake. We celebrate "City of Water Day" on 7/16. That's the day you want to invite your friends and family down to share a fun day on the water. In addition to these special events we'll have member paddles being announced every week.

All of these events are made possible by people just like you. So if you are new to the club, consider volunteering by joining a committee. It's the only way to enjoy the full benefits of Sebago.



Sebago sailors frostbiting at Seawanhaka Yacht Club.

SAILING COMMITTEE REPORT – SPRING 2016 By Jim Luton and Holly Sears

It is spring once again. Normally we would be on the water by now with our Spring Race Series. But as we all know, the dock has been removed and replaced, and as I write this I see a glimmer of hope that we may actually have it installed and in working order to at least do some impromptu racing by this Sunday.

In the meantime, we have been working hard to get the fleet up and running for the season. We've had a lot of work to do but I'm hoping we will get through the bulk of it so that we can focus on our scheduled events and get out on the water. I'm sorry to say that we have retired the first boat we ever acquired for our dinghy sailing program - the Sunfish Lovechild. She took her final blow this winter flying off the overhead rack. RIP Lovechild, we loved you dearly.

A big thanks to all of you who have pitched in to help with our spring workdays, but a special Thank You goes to Pat Daniels who has really been working hard on the boat and board repairs. He's gotten quite good at it too! We're still plugging away at repairs but my hope is that soon we can put our energy into the on-the-water activities.

We have been revamping our program to get more people involved in the day-to-day maintenance of our boats and facilities, to better monitor the use of our club boats, and to provide more ways for our sailors to review the set-up, rigging, and methodologies particular to our club. Pat Daniels, Hans Liebert, Tracy Kornrich, Miles Green, and David Solnick

have all helped with new ideas to accomplish these goals. So sailors, be sure you are up-to-date on the new procedures. We have sign-in sheets, repair sheets, lists of certified sailors and checklists for each boat type.

Everyone should sign up for at least one work area to help maintain our program. These areas are: 1-Boat repair and maintenance, 2-Grounds maintenance, 3-Prospective and new member tours and orientation, 4-Sailing mentors (must be a level 4 instructor-level sailor). I'll be posting links to information documents online through the sailing page of the club website once I get them completed.

In addition to our usual scheduled events which include the Monthly Cruises, the Annual Sailing Class, and the Fall Race Series, we hope to have at least an organized event every weekend. Possibilities include: Impromptu Cruises; Racing, Docking, and Launching Workshops; Double-Hander Workshop (scheduled for July 9 with David Cripton); Intermediate Sunfish Sailing-Instructor, and Two-ina-Boat Workshops (scheduled for May 21 and June 5); Laser 101 (boat handling, tuning, racing strategy, etc.). We'll be posting these events on the sailing list, so keep up with your club emails and the Club Calendar. sebagosailing@googlegroups.com

Look for us on the water soon! Happy Sailing!





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Jonathan Blaufarb

Mia Brandt

Steve Coe

Greg Davidek

Dorothy Fyfe

Margrethe Horlyck-Romanovsky

Rachel Makleff

Peter Maloney

Irene Meisel

Andrew Ness

William Rossi

William Santana























CANOE PADDLE WORKSHOP

By Jim Luton

There have been quite a few projects going on in and around the boat shop this spring, projects big and small. The Point Comfort 23 continues to occupy center stage of course, but Chris Bickford has managed to build four beautiful Gerrit Rietveld chairs for the Kevin Rogers Memorial, and also a classic shavehorse bench for use in future carving and paddle making projects. Steve Welch is working on several club canoes, and the sailors have been doing a lot of much needed fiberglass repair. We still managed however, to shoehorn our first-ever canoe paddle making workshop into the mix, a workshop I had been promising to run for a couple of years.

There was quite a bit of preparation for this workshop on my end, mostly because I'm not a seasoned paddle maker, or wasn't I should say, as I've now put quite a few hours into the planning and execution of several paddles. This was to be a "learn as you go" kind of thing for all of us. I accepted five students into the workshop (Chris Bickford, Charles Eggleston, Lisa Nett, Dan Olson, and Denis Sivack), insisting that they should all be able to attend both days of the class. There would just not be enough time to get much out of a single day. I made patterns for two different traditional, single-piece canoe paddles: an otter tail,

and a beaver tail. Along with the blade patterns, there are grip patterns, and carving guideline patterns; seven in all, to make two different style paddles. I asked each participant to choose a blade design and a paddle length, because I wanted to bandsaw each blank to rough shape ahead of time. This proved to be a necessary time saver as there is a lot of ground to cover in only two days, particularly for those not accustomed to the various tools involved. Some months ago, I was awarded a budget by the Board to purchase a nice set of hand woodworking tools for use in the boat shop. This I did, and we all gave them a workout!

A couple of weeks prior to the workshop, Chris B. and I made the trek up to White Plains and the M. L. Condon lumber company. Condon is known for stocking specialty boat building materials, so it is often worth the trip up to pick out supplies. There is a law however, similar to Murphy's, that states "You will never find the lumber you want or need on the day you visit the yard. You should have bought what you had your eye on during the last visit". And there was no exception to that rule this time. I wanted 6/4 Alaskan Yellow Cedar, or Sitka Spruce, but had to settle for 8/4 Phillipine Mahogany (meranti). It proved acceptable though, and while not ideal, it was light and easy to carve. I marked

continues page 16



Workshop lecture.



"Well done class!"

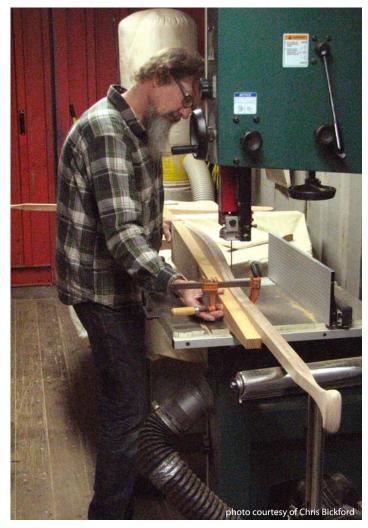
out each student's paddle on the rough blanks (plus one for myself to demonstrate on), sawed them all out to rough shape, and let them sit for a week to stabilize.

Over the course of two days, each student hand planed and shaped their bandsawn blanks. I was kept quite busy, keeping tabs on all the spokeshaving, hand planing, carving, and eventually sanding that each of the five were engaged in. And I talked myself hoarse in the process. It is rather miraculous to watch a light, sleek, streamlined form emerge from a thick, heavy hunk of timber. The process must be methodical, with each planing or carving step completed before moving on to the next. An accurate lay down of patterns and carving guidelines must be followed, with the paddle's centerline a sacred constant. This assures symmetry, and ultimately a beautifully functional paddle. Many of the specialty tools were brand new to the students, and I often had to remind myself of that fact. I've been using these fussy edge tools for most of my forty-or-so years as a woodworker, and even though I am still learning (thankfully), their use and handling is second nature to me. I must have forgotten the struggle to master these tools and techniques! But we are fortunate to have access to some very high-quality tools, and that speeds up the learning process quite a bit.

We had to leave some parts of the blade unfinished, in order to get moving on the shaft carving. I wanted to make sure that each aspect of the process was covered so that the students could come back and work on their own. Eight-siding the shafts was a new concept for some. This process defines first a symmetrical, octagonal section, then a sixteen-sided section, and finally a round or oval section. Once again, those layout lines are sacrosanct! This technique applies also to spar building, or oar making, and is a useful one to master if one is to work much around boats. We did not quite finish our paddles, though we came close, and I am more than willing to help the students finish up.

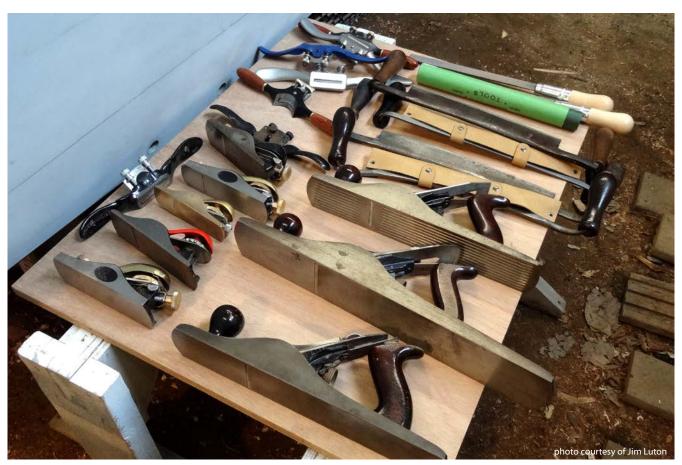
My goal with these workshops (and there will be more) is to provide the means for our members to gain experience and confidence in the use of hand and power tools so that they might pass along the experience to others. We have a wonderful facility, and the means to engage in some real high-quality woodworking and boat building. This is what the boat shop is all about. I know as Canoe Chair, Dan Olson is keen to make more paddles, and to help others do so as well. I'm happy too, to pass on some of my experience and enthusiasm for boats and boat building. It is quite a neat thing to make and use these beautiful objects, rather than just ordering some factory object from the internet. This type of work was once a necessary means of survival, and that might be true for some of us even now, though in a different way. I would be lost without the means to make things!

Happy paddling.





Top: Sawing out the blade taper. Bottom: Blade and grip patterns.



Top: Tools of the trade. Bottom: Marking the shaft to blade transition.





Top: Denis shapes his grip.
Bottom eft: Marking out the blade. Bottom right: Eight-siding the shaft.









Top left: Paddle layout. Top right: Checking for symmetry. Bottom: Sighting the shaft.



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Left (previous page): Carving the blade. Right: Checking for square. Bottom: Drawknife demonstration.







Top: Hand planing the blade. Next page - Top: Spokeshave. Bottom: Shaping the blade.







Left: The perfect grip? Bottom: An ottertale in cherry.





Top: On to the the next step. Bottom: Shaping the shaft.



THE POINT COMFORT 23 - SPRING 2016 By Jim Luton

Blessed by an unusually mild winter, the boat shop crew missed only a single weekend due to extreme cold. The little stove was kept stoked, mostly with wood split by Larry Lembo, who seems to relish the task. The interior has not gone nearly as fast as the exterior, with many more small, fiddly pieces to cut and fit, and some tricky design and layout issues to resolve. We fit a watertight compartment up in the bow, with a deck above that will provide storage for life jackets, extra ground tackle, and spare lines. An anchor locker abaft the forward bulkhead has a hinged lid that forms a nice seat. We had that locker all laid out before we decided to see if the anchor would actually fit, and had to enlarge it somewhat. Always good to check before the screws and epoxy go in!

We also fit framing for a full-width bench seat integral with the pilot's console. I felt like we needed the extra seating in this otherwise open plan skiff, but we also would be able to run all of the hydraulic steering lines, control cables, and fuel lines through the lockers and over to the starboard side to make the run aft to the motor and battery (rather than through the floors in the bilge). The full-width bench proved too hard to climb over though, so we compromised, leaving the port side open for passage fore and aft. We'll fit a removable drop board in that

area to maximize seating when necessary. As built, we have seating for four, plus the pilot at the helm. More can go aboard, but they will have to make do on cushions on the floorboards, or standing. But who wants a crowd anyway?

Four fiberglass tubes were fitted through the transom for splash-well drains, and dry storage drains. At least one more will have to be cut through for the bilge pump, and maybe two, if we fit both a manual and an electric pump (which I would like). The major deck beams and washboard knees have been installed, lacking only the elliptical framing which defines that lovely curved coaming up forward.

We've begun painting the areas which will be closed up by decking or hatches, and have built the drop-in center pilot's console, which includes a permanent fuel tank. Once that goes in, we can mill all of the pine beadboard that will finish the bulkheads and console. This detail will add a lot of traditional style to this fairly simple workboat.

A lot remains to be done, but we are working away on the details, and checking things off the list. I hope that by the next issue of the Blade, we can report a successful launching. Stay tuned for the celebration!



Fitting the splash well bulkhead.

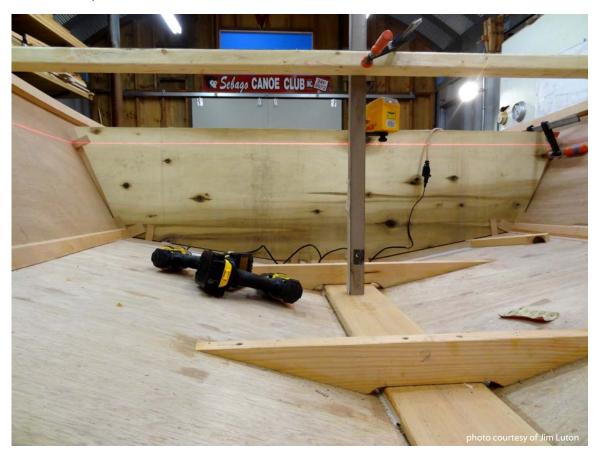


Top: Splash well framing. Bottom: The completed well.





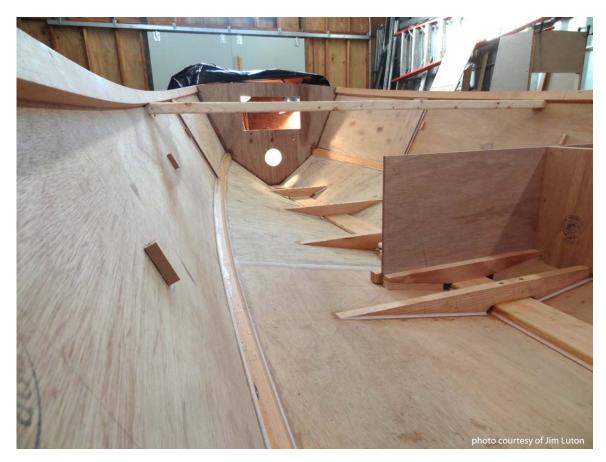
Top: Boring the splash well drains. Bottom: Bulkhead pattern.





Top: Fitting a locker part.
Bottom: Forward bulkhead and anchor locker framing.





Top: Looking forward. Bottom: Fitting the console bulkhead.





Top and Bottom: Console mockup.





Top: Blazing Skil Saw. Bottom: Washboard knee pattern.





Top: A tricky hand-cut bevel. Bottom: Washboard knees installed.



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Top and Bottom: Anchor locker framing.





Bow locker deck.



Top and Bottom: Carlin fairing.



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Top and Bottom: Carlin installed.



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Top: Knotching a deck beam. Bottom: Seat locker.





Top and Bottom: Console with built in fuel tank.





Where we stand now...

BUILDING A SHAVEHORSE

By Chris Bickford

I decided to make a shavehorse for Sebago Canoe Club members to use shaving wood. The plans are from Peter Follensbee who adopted his shavehorse from John Alexanders' plans illustrated in "Make a Chair from a Tree," published by Astragal Press. Peter Follensbee uses his shavehorse for turning stock and working various short lengths of "stuff" in the course of making furniture for 1627 recreated houses in Plimoth, Massachusetts.

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Top: Hand shaped tenons. Bottom: Legs left long.







Top: The finished horse. Bottom: The horse in use.



THE KEVIN ROGERS MEMORIAL CHAIR PROJECT

By Chris Bickford

In 2016 Vice Commodore John Wright proposed a chair be built to memorialize Kevin Rogers, a Sebago Canoe Club volunteer who died in 2012. Four chairs were built by Chris Bickford and Sebago Canoe Club volunteers, two chairs using Douglas Fir and Pine and two chairs using Spanish Cedar.

'Chris did a beautiful job of crafting these classic Gerrit Rietveld chairs for Sebago and the Rogers Family.'

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One chair has this many pieces?





Ready for sanding and painting.



Oiling the beautiful Spanish Cedar.

THE SEA IN RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS AND JOHN LUTHER ADAMS WITH SOME OBSERVATIONS ON LITERARY AFFINITIES By Denis Sivack

Three works by Vaughan Williams significantly treat the sea and reflect his choral and orchestral interests: **A Sea Symphony** (1910, of-ten called **Symphony #1**), **Riders to the Sea** (1925-31, premiered in 1937), and **Sinfonia Antartica** - a reworking of his score for the 1948 film **Scott of the Antarctic**.

A Sea Symphony, as one of Vaughan Williams' early works and his longest symphony, is a masterful example of how chorus and orchestra together would mark so much of his work. The text for chorus is from Walt Whitman. In lieu of my discussing the work here, I invite you to listen to and view the YouTube arrangement, (uploaded by Colin, March 10, 2013) of a London Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir recording, which gives you the 71-minute orchestration with a succession of sea, ship, and celestial images (celebrating "the courage of the individual human soul adrift upon the sea of life"- reviewer's comment) against which are the text lines in sync as they are being sung.

I suggest that you listen through a headset, going fullscreen or playing through a large flatscreen TV. There is not a "storyline" as such in this VW symphony so much as the music and chorus together with the maritime images of this recommended YouTube presentation constitute a beautiful metaphor of transcendence.

Often discussed in Vaughan Williams' work is the question of just what is narrative or program music - an issue related to his war- related symphonies. There is a clear storyline as the basis of Vaughan Williams' **Riders to the Sea** because his choral rendition of the play by John Millington Synge follows the play faithfully. While I know the play, I found it difficult to follow the lines in VW's rendition without a libretto; having the play's text just does not work. Instead I listened for the orchestra and the voices themselves as music. There is a very satisfying LP Caedmon recording of Synge's play that strongly carries the beauty of the spoken word itself in the story of this island woman who has successively lost her husband and then her sons to the sea. In preparing this article I found online a remastered copy of Brian Desmond Hurst's 1935 movie of the play. While the image quality is not good, you do get views of the Aran Island coast and seas and have the cadences of Synge's lines.

Vaughan Williams's **Sinfonia Antartica** is a reworking of his score for the 1948 film **Scott of the Antarctic** and was first per formed in 1953, some 40-plus years after **A Sea Symphony**. Now the composer is much older and our sea is ice and man is challenged to transverse it. Musical passages almost parallel the first theme of **A Sea Symphony** of waves and a ship with instrumentation suggesting ice, snow, penguins and the landscape.

The voice sirens of the first movement hauntingly suggest that the attractions of our desires may ultimately destroy us. The music builds to that of a full organ blast as the explorers reach a gigantic ice barrier. Human choral voices play out as sirens with snowstorm sounds, bells, more voices, and a wind machine carrying us through the explorers' last hopes as only siren-songs and polar winds remain.

John Luther Adams was born in Mississippi in 1953, the year of **Sinfonia Antartica's** first performance. In the early 1970s he attended Cal Arts, working on environmental issues which brought him to Alaska where he remained for about thirty years. He has said that bad career choices became good artistic choices, for his work always drew from the natural world and place and increasingly explored "sonic geography."

In residence at the Banff Center in Alberta, and by commission, he created and first presented **Inuksuit** in 2009. **Inuksuit** refers to the towering stone markers used by the Inuit and other native peoples to orient themselves in the vast Arctic spaces. It is a percussion piece for 9 to 99 musicians, dispersed and moving over a large area. This large-scale work by someone who once was a teenage drummer in a rock band was meant for outdoor performance, with the ambient environmental sounds heard as part of the piece. The listeners themselves are encouraged to move through the spaces. When the work was presented in the Park Avenue Armory, musicians were dispersed, with some musicians in the large drill hall and others in smaller rooms. Microphones outside the armory brought the exterior sounds into the listening space.

Adams' music unravels "in fractal patterns that mimic great vast landscapes as well as tiny variations in the snow" (WQXR "Meet the Composer" notes). Adams' program notes for **Inuksuit** say it "is haunted by the vision of the melting of the polar ice, the rising of the seas, and what may remain of humanity's presence after the waters recede."

The CD for Inuksuit includes a high-end DVD with Surround Sound and a documentary film **Strange and Sacred Noise**.

In 2014 Adams won the Pulitzer Prize for Music for the orchestral work **Become Ocean**, commissioned by the Seattle Symphony which first performed it. When asked by the music director Ludovic Morlot to compose for the Symphony, Adams suggested that he build on an earlier 12-minute piece, **Dark Waves**. The director was interested and Adams composed what he called "**Dark Waves** on steroids."

Become Ocean's title comes from a John Cage tribute to Lou Harrison (also a mentor and friend to Adams): "Listening to it we become ocean." Adams knows that we have come from the sea and, with the melting of polar ice, may well return to it. However, Adams does not want to have his work seen as "activism" but as "art." Chris Slaby writes, "his professional focus as an artist is more to evoke than to preach."

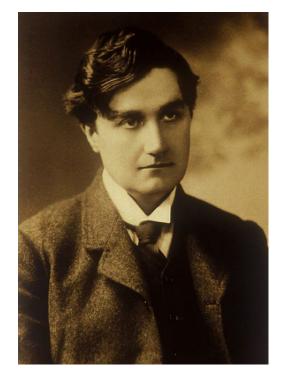
Alex Ross in **The New Yorker** has carefully and clearly written about the triad structure of the work in its parts and orchestra section winds, brass and strings: "The three main sections of the orchestra play sequences of varying lengths, each of which swells to a climax and then fades, and each of which reverses course at its midpoint, in the manner of a palindrome . . . ending where it began."

Chris Slaby observes that in contrast to classical compositions before the twentieth century which generally used melody to create a theme, "Become Ocean is shaped by waves of sound from different instruments at various volumes." He is not giving us a narrative or story, instead he "evokes an environment through aural themes."

While there was a 5-year overlap in the lives of Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) and John Luther Adams (1953-) the works discussed here cover a composition span of a century, and influences of two countries, and we are fortunate to have John Luther Adams not only with us but currently living here in our water-surrounded city.

Author's notes:

- 1. John Luther Adams is not to be confused with the composer John Adams.
- 2. The CD for **Become Ocean** also includes Surround Sound and a DVD documentary.
- 3. In preparing this material I learned that Adams has composed theater music for works originally written as non-theater works by Barry Lopez. I do not know of recordings of these pieces and I am pursuing this. My introduction to Barry Lopez came with gifts of his **River Notes and Desert Notes** from a special friend and I have since been following him. By chance I got from a 6th Avenue street vendor an LP of David Darling playing cello while Lopez reads from **River Notes**. Barry Lopez is also the author of **Arctic Dreams** and as he travels the world he collects translations of **Moby Dick** into the language of the country he is visiting. You can't escape the sea.





Top: Ralph Vaughn Williams. Bottom: John Luther Adams.

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EBlade

Thanks to Editor: Beth Bloedow, Designer: Holly Sears.

All content in this issue is from individual contributors and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Sebago Canoe Club.

